

TERRESTRIAL WILDLIFE EXISTING CONDITION

The Lassen NF’s Land and Resource Management Plan discusses road densities in terms of Low, Medium and High habitat capability for five Management Indicator Species (see Appendix O of the LRMP). These are:

Species	Road Density (miles/sq mile) <i>High</i> Habitat Capability	Road Density (miles/sq mile) <i>Medium</i> Habitat Capability	Road Density (miles/sq mile) <i>Low</i> Habitat Capability
Black Bear	0-0.5	0.5-5.0	>5.0
Fisher	0-0.5	0.5-2.0	2.0-3.0
Marten*	<1.0	<2.0	<3.0
Mule Deer	<2.5	2.5-6.0	>6.0
Pronghorn	<2.0	2.0-4.0	>4.0

* Figures are for paved roads only (LRMP page O-13)

Also, on page 4-17, the LRMP states, “Areas with road densities of 2 miles per square mile or higher will be evaluated for habitat effectiveness. Roads and travel networks will be assessed for existing and future needs. Roads no longer needed for administrative purposes will be closed to enhance wildlife habitat, and to protect water quality and soil productivity. Some roads may be obliterated and the land restored to a near natural gradient.”

The network of roads across the Forest has altered and continues to alter vegetative communities and habitat for wildlife species. Human use facilitated by the road network has also influenced habitat use by wildlife species. Direct and indirect effects of the road network include habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation, reduced effectiveness of near-road habitats, mortality due to vehicular collisions and mortality and disturbance due to recreation use, such as hunting. Roads may also act as a barrier to wildlife movements. On the Lassen, roads also impact habitat by allowing access for personal-use fuelwood harvests, resulting in the loss of snags and downed logs.

On a positive side, roads provide access to a wide range of habitat improvement projects and wildfire suppression activities. Roads also provide opportunities to the public to enjoy non-consumptive activities associated with a wildlife resource, such as birding or other viewing of wildlife species.